

Congressman Opposes Efforts to Eliminate Workforce Investment Act Funding, Leading Movement in Congress to Support President Obama's Plan to Maintain the Program

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today toured the One Stop Career Center (Orange Works) in Newburgh and highlighted the need for strong federal funding of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which provides critical funding for employment training, job search and workforce placement programs at the Newburgh facility and at similar centers throughout New York. Following a failed attempt earlier this year by House Republicans to eliminate all funding for the WIA for the remainder of the current fiscal year, Hinchey redoubled efforts to protect the program from any future attacks. The congressman is now leading a group of 56 other House members in support of strong funding for the program as part of next year's federal budget, which Congress is currently debating.

"House Republicans are presenting a false choice when they say we must decide between cutting the Workforce Investment Act or having an out of control federal debt. That's nonsense," Hinchey said. "We should protect the Workforce Investment Act while cutting real waste such as the \$8 billion in needless subsidies the government hands out each year to major oil and gas companies -- the most profitable industry in American history. And we should not be afraid to return to the Clinton-era tax rates for millionaires and billionaires instead of cutting important programs like the Workforce Investment Act. The choice is clear -- we must side with those New Yorkers and Americans who are struggling to find work and get back on their feet."

Job training and placement centers funded through this critical legislation can be found throughout the congressional district Hinchey represents. The congressman voted to establish the Workforce Investment Act in 1998. Since that time, he has worked to support the program, which has helped thousands throughout New York find and prepare for good jobs. As a member of the Job Corps Caucus, Hinchey has also worked to protect investments in the Job Corps program, which has facilities in Sullivan County and is funded through the WIA. The congressman has also been a longtime supporter of another initiative funded through the WIA -- the YouthBuild program, which enables young people to achieve their dreams by helping them secure high school diplomas or GEDs while they learn critical occupational skills that lead to gainful employment. Hinchey recently announced that the City of Poughkeepsie would benefit from a \$1.1 million YouthBuild contract funded through last year's budget.

"There are thousands of Orange County residents who have passed through the doors at the Orange Works centers after they lost their jobs and didn't know where to turn," said Hinchey

who was joined at the Newburgh center by Steve Knob, Director of Orange County Employment and Training, Pat DiCesare, Director of the Orange County Workforce Investment Board, and Marie Blair, Director of the Newburgh Orange Works Center. "During this difficult economic downturn, Orange Works has provided many thousands of individuals with assistance and support in updating their resumes, upgrading work skills, accessing job listings and referrals to local employers, and improving job interview techniques. These services have helped countless local residents find new jobs. With unemployment still high in the wake of the economic collapse, now is exactly the wrong time to cut funding for this and other One Stop Career Centers throughout New York and the rest of the nation. Unfortunately, that's exactly what the House Republican majority in Washington is attempting to do. That's why I'm leading a group of 56 of my fellow House members in support of strong and continued funding for the Workforce Investment Act."

Hinchey, along with the 56 other House members, sent a letter last month to the chairman and ranking member of the House Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee in support of President Obama's funding recommended funding levels for the Workforce Investment Act in the Fiscal Year 2012 authorization bill. The full text of the letter follows:

May 20, 2011

The Honorable Denny Rehberg
Chairman

Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Committee 2358 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Committee
1016 Longworth Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member

Dear Chairman Rehberg and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) provides critical funding for training and employment services across our nation and has effectively helped Americans find work since its inception in 1998. We respectfully support the President's recommended funding levels of \$5,335,335,000 for the FY 2012.

The Workforce Investment Act provides formula grant funding for adults, dislocated workers and youth to states based on unemployment rate and labor force size. The funds are effectively administered by local Workforce Investment Boards, which consist of local businesses owners and community leaders. These funds support regional workforce development centers across the nation that help Americans find meaningful employment in a changing economy. One-stop workforce centers offer a wide variety of services from computer access to more in-depth career counseling and vocational training. WIA also provides formula grant funding for a variety of youth programs that offer tutoring, summer employment opportunities, internships and vocational skills training.

WIA funding directly supports a variety of popular programs such as YouthBuild, Job Corps and the Green Jobs Innovation Fund. These cost-effective programs are proven to help fill specific job-training needs in local communities. Job Corps provides valuable academic and vocational training to high-risk youth in a safe residential setting and YouthBuild offers young people hands-on training in the housing and construction trades. The Green Jobs Innovation Fund has proven to be so effective that the Department of Labor seeks to expand the Fund, from \$40 million in FY 2010 to \$60 million for FY 2012. This investment will enable the Department to continue its efforts to provide workers with the skills necessary to compete in a green energy economy.

With well over 14 million Americans currently unemployed in this country, we must continue to strategically invest in our workforce development programs that are helping to rebuild our fragile economy. That is why we respectfully request that the Workforce Investment Act receive \$5,335,335,000 in FY2012. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Congressman Maurice Hinchey & his 56 House Colleagues